

NAVSUP 4.0 & SPS-I Users Group Meeting 16 June 1999

Introduction

The Navy CMO office hosted a meeting for 4.0 – SPS-I user sites. All of the Conus “server sites” were invited to participate. The focus for having the meeting was to provide a forum for these sites to share information to improve their performance levels as they continue to be fully operational with PD2 at their SAP user sites.

Participants

Diane Lucas – CMO office
Frank Murray – NAVSUP
Cmdr Ron Kineman – FISC Norfolk
Sue Smith – FISC Norfolk
Jennifer Schultz – FISC Norfolk det Washington Navy Yard
Steve Busch – PwC (CMO)
Matt Nielsen – NAVSUP
Scott Raley – NAVAIR

BPA Calls

The PD2 BPA call does not have all the information required by DFAS. AMS assisted in developing a smart attachment that pulls the required data into a separate word document that can be attached to the BPA. Because attachments will work with EDA, it was discussed to expand the smart attachment to include all information required by DFAS. Therefore, only the smart attachment would be sent to EDA...not as an attachment to a BPA call.

Ron Kineman will provide a copy of the script and user instructions to the CMO to distribute to the other sites after consulting with AMS to expand the current smart attachment to include all BPA data.

Performance Issues

Frank Murray noted that from a site perspective PD2 ver 4.0 is significantly reducing productivity.

Work arounds significantly contribute to lower productivity by users, as they require extra steps.

He recommended that studies be undertaken to determine the extent of time required to accomplish certain basic contracting actions.

Cmdr Kineman noted that there is currently no SPS process that doesn't require some sort of workaround.

MILSTRIP

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PD2 does not currently have a feature to easily search for documents by MILSTRIP number. This is a required number on CLINS for the SPS-I interface as well as the most efficient index to search for documents.

Cmdr Kineman stated that this one issue would increase productivity and remove several workarounds because they would then be able to have multiple requisitions under a single PR instead of one requisition number under each PR. The current process is required only because MILSTRIP is not searchable.

He reported AMS is creating a utility that will allow the buyers to do searches by MILSTRIP.

Requisition Number

Jennifer Schultz discussed a need to have the PD² MILSTRIP field on the CLINS match the requisition number. There is a question of matching the MILSTRIP number of the CLINS with the requisition number after it goes through STARS.

During the SPS-I training, SPS-I sites were informed that the PD² MILSTRIP fields on the CLINS was a mandatory field for all outgoing interfaces. According to AMS, “the MILSTRIP field in PD² is a free format text field and should be entered in the following format for external system processing: UIC (6char) + Date (YDDD) + Serial Number (4 or 5 char) without dashes in between the values.”

When the document in question is an RCP (Request for Contractual Procurement) the format stated by AMS in the SPS-I guide is incorrect. The proper format is the following:

UIC (6 characters) + FY (2 character) + RC + Serial Number

This ONLY applies to RCPs. Normal MILSTRIP document numbers should use the format of UIC+date+serial number without dashes.

DBOF

There are 3 STARS processes. There are problems getting the right files to the right place through SPS-I MQ.

Frank Murray reported that they are trying to get MQ to be able to parse out the correct files to the correct STARS file.

There is also a problem of the program erroring out due to minor format discrepancies.

FISC Norfolk provided users a DFAS Workbook to ensure consistency in inputting the line of accounting data.

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Diane Lucas reported that they will standardize the accounting data in the 850 format in version 4.2. This will require a database change.

Personnel Issues

The sites noted that in the midst of trying to learn and use this new software system, many workers are being let go as a result of a RIF. This exacerbates two problems, morale and desire to learn the new system. With fewer numbers of workers doing the same amount of work with a less efficient system productivity has dropped dramatically.

At FISC Norfolk, Ron Kineman noted that as the users began using PD2 the productivity dropped significantly but then rose sharply after about 6 weeks.

He also estimated that after they have completely mastered the new system they will only be at about 50% of their productivity as with APADE with version 4.0. However this will improve once they are upgraded to 4.1.b or c and the MILSTRIP is searchable.

The most productive workers have completed up to 70 actions in 2.5 months. The least productive down to almost none. FISC Norfolk is planning to provide focused refresher training for the low production workers.

Some of the productivity problem rests with the former APADE buyers. Specifically, the legacy system spoon fed its users the clauses and didn't require the buyers to have to make many choices. Moreover, the buyers were quite familiar with the APADE loaded clauses since they had been the same for years – in other words, most – if not all – were completely outdated. Now the buyers have to make decisions about which clauses to include and not include. Many buyers do not feel adequately trained or are uncomfortable with that responsibility. In addition, other paperless initiatives as well as CCR registration have also had a negative impact on productivity of these former APADE users. Lastly, most users moving to PD² from APADE were not familiar with a Windows-based environment, Microsoft Word, and/or utilizing the internet; therefore, a great number have very weak computer skills whereas PD² requires a variety of skills to take advantage of its capabilities.

The combination of all these issues on the former APADE buyers ability to just buy well has been enormous.

FISC Norfolk Det Washington is re-training its large purchase (manual) users because the contract specialists have not been using 4.0 since they were initially trained in June/July 1998.

EDA

A long discussion on EDA with several issues imbedded.

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PD² ver 4.0 uses NECO via saving the PD² document as a Microsoft Word file.

NOTE: The user must save the PD² document while on Page 1 or the file will get corrupted.

If a user skips a PD2 PIIN number, the system continues from that point. All skipped numbers are "lost" in a sense. There is a fix in process that will allow the System Administrator to reset the counter back to the skipped portion.

1057 Report

Each activity should have only one issuing office in SPS. If more than one issuing office is required, all issuing offices must be identified when creating a DD1057 report. CDR Kineman warned that even if an issuing office is deleted, if a user had that issuing office in their preferences, it would still populate the issuing office block even after being deleted. The site administrators had to go to each computer and ensure that the one good issuing office was in each users preference—not any of the ones that were deleted.

Sites must scrub their organization files. They need to ensure organization files have correct and consistent names, addresses etc.

Jennifer Schultz inquired as to whether there is a centralized organization listing (by UIC) on the web similar to the CCR vendor site that users can utilize to verify information. At this time there is no centralized organization listing on the web with current data. The CMO office will investigate with CCR.

Diane Lucas pointed out that there is a site called the Defense Automated Address System that may be useful.

NECO

Pax River has a process that links MQ to NECO that uses EDI to transmit. This will eliminate the need to FTP the files.

CDR Kineman stated that they want the buyer to buy, not have to work a lot of steps to put out a document.

Diane Lucas suggested centralizing the placing of documents onto NECO to a few users to increase efficiency.

Frank reported that DMC has adopted MQ and is looking to centralize. This will lead to configuration control.

CBD/Small Business issues

Matt Nielsen of NECO pointed out that a DFARS change is pending regarding posting a synopsis in the Commerce Business Daily will no longer be required if the solicitation is posted with NECO.

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Since many small businesses lack the knowledge and finances to be on-line, Jennifer Schultz expressed concern that going completely to an Internet only distribution of solicitations may have a negative impact on small businesses.

In order to assist small business, the Electronic Commerce Resource Centers (ECRC) were created to help small businesses with these kinds of issues as well as Internet training.

Other issues

SPS-I is creating duplicate files through the UADPS-IN interface.

SPS-I is creating duplicate PR's when the requisition number entered in the PR block does not match the requisition number entered in the MILSTRIP block. CDR Kineman noted that FISC Norfolk turned off their UADPS-IN interface, in part to prevent the duplication of PR's. The UADPS-IN interface provide little to no value added.

In a future version of SPS-I, we may request AMS to have the match performed against the MILSTRIP number, vice the PR number.

Purchase request number changes inflate the work in process report. Users have to use the same number format on each one or it will create a new PR. Diane Lucas pointed out that ZOA must match the MILSTRIP not the PR.